

THE SUBFAMILY DIAPRIINAE (HYMENOPTERA: DIAPRIIDAE) NEW TO THE ISLE OF MAN

J. P. O'CONNOR AND M. A. O'CONNOR

c/o National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

The Diapriidae is a large family of relatively obscure insects, represented by three subfamilies (Ismarinae, Belytinae and Diapriinae) in the British Isles. Most species are probably endoparasitoids that develop in dipterous pupae within the puparia. Many are gregarious endoparasitoids with as many as 30–50 individuals emerging from a puparium (Gauld & Bolton, 1988). The Diapriinae is a poorly understood group in the British Isles and even the number of species which have been recorded is uncertain. There are two British checklists which do not correspond with one another (Fergusson, 1978; Nixon, 1980). The former is more comprehensive, listing 122 definite species. However Nixon only included 106 species in his handbook, stating Fergusson's list contained many species names that were likely to be misidentifications or at any rate would require prolonged identification. Since then, O'Connor & Ashe (1992) have reinstated *Idiotypa rufiventris* (Thom.) while Notton (1992, 1993, 1994) has added seven species. There are no published Manx records of the Diapriinae. During a visit to the island in July 1996, the authors collected three species while searching for other insects and these records are reported here. Dr David Notton has kindly provided details of another species and it is also included. The material has been identified using Nixon (1980).

Basalys abrupta Thom. Female, Laxey Wheel (SC4385), 15.vii.1996. The specimen was collected on an area of cliff-face with water seepage. *B. abrupta* is a common species both in Britain and Ireland (Nixon, 1980; O'Connor & Ashe, 1992).

Platymischus dilatatus Westw. Three males, two females, Port e Vullen (SC4792), 15.vii.1996. Specimens were collected along with *Trichopria nigricornis* (see below). Both species were crawling about in large numbers upon three large black boulders and one small white boulder beside a waterfall-filled pool on a stony and sandy beach. Surprisingly, no specimens were found on other boulders or stones elsewhere on the beach. Bolton & Gauld (1988) state that *P. dilatatus* is frequently found in large numbers on the seashore in Britain where it parasitizes the sepsid *Orygma luctuosum* Meig. in rotting seaweed. It has also been found in Ireland, both in seaweed and crawling on a stone (O'Connor & Ashe, 1992).

Trichopria aequata (Thom.). Female, Ballaglass Glen (SC48), 24.iii.1950. W. D. Hincks (Manchester Museum). The species is widespread and often abundant in both Britain and Ireland.

Trichopria nigricornis (Marshall). Seven males, seven females, Port e Vullen (SC4792), 15.vii.1996. *T. nigricornis* is probably a common coastal species in the British Isles. In Ireland, it was frequently taken by A. W. Stelfox under *Silene vulgaris maritima* (With.) A. and D. Löve (O'Connor & Ashe, 1992).

Voucher specimens have been deposited in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, and The Natural History Museum, London.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The beetles of northeastern North America by the late N. M. Downie and R. H. Arnett, Sandhill Crane Press, Gainesville, Florida, 1996, 1722 pages, 2 vols, hardback, \$195.—This ambitious book has been long awaited, particularly since the original volume 1, a 272-page book published in 1994, was subsequently scrapped and rewritten for the revised 2-volume issue recently arrived from the USA. Essentially, the book is an extensive key to species with brief individual descriptions and distribution data. The keys are remarkably unillustrated, with just a few whole-insect pictures to punctuate the text. The keys also contain many comparative couplets, which will prove difficult when examining lone specimens of difficult groups. But the book is very concise given that it covers 7356 species in 1834 genera. The area covered includes Greenland, Canada from Ontario westwards and the USA from Minneapolis and St Louis west to Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Newport News. Each family is appended with a useful list of references—many to important works from which the keys and text are adapted. At just over £125, the book is very reasonably priced; I took advantage of the pre-publication offer and got them for \$99 plus \$12 postage, about £70, and I think I got a real bargain.

RICHARD A. JONES

Animals under logs and stones by C. Philip Wheeler and Helen J. Read. *Naturalists' Handbook* 22, Slough, Richmond Publishing, 1996, 90 pp, paperback £8.95, hardback £16.—Another micro-habitat guide from Richmond follows the usual style. A short introduction to the semi-subterranean environment is followed by brief descriptions of likely invertebrates and their lifestyles and several illustrated keys to selected groups enabling identification to genus or species in many cases. The authors have been pushed to cover a very broad group of animals in a small booklet, but they have done well to cram so much in. The book is aimed at non-specialists like 'A' level students, or perhaps undergraduates, but any general entomologist will also find it useful if only for providing usable keys to the common species of earthworms, millipedes and centipedes.

RICHARD A. JONES